



Safest People, Safest Places

Local Government Act 1972

A Meeting of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington will be held in the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on Friday 11 November 2022 at 10.00 am to consider the following business:-

PART A

1. Declarations of interest, if any
If Members are aware of a private or personal conflict of interest in relation to any items on the Agenda, this should be disclosed at this stage or when the conflict of interest arises during consideration of an item in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2022 (Pages 3 - 6)
3. Current Correspondence - Report of Chief Fire Officer (Pages 7 - 14)
4. Minutes of the Audit and Finance Committee - Report of Chair of Audit and Finance Committee (Pages 15 - 18)
5. Minutes of the Human Resources Committee - Report of Chair of the Human Resources Committee (Pages 19 - 20)
6. Tri-Service Community Safety Responders - Report of Director Community Risk Management (Pages 21 - 22)
7. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgent to warrant consideration
8. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information

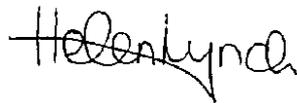
Part B

Items during which it is considered the meeting is not likely to be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information).

9. Vital Fire Solutions Business Update - Presentation (Pages 23 - 28)

10. Strategic Planning Day - 10th October 2022 - Report of Chief Fire Officer (Pages 29 - 36)
11. Update on Pay Award and Industrial Action - Report of Chief Fire Officer (Pages 37 - 42)
12. Delay of Appointment of Deputy Chief Fire Officer - Report of Chief Fire Officer (Pages 43 - 44)
13. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

PURSUANT to the provisions of the above named Act, **I HEREBY SUMMON YOU** to attend the said meeting



H LYNCH

Clerk to the Combined Fire Authority
for County Durham and Darlington

County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

TO: The Members of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors J Atkinson, A Batey, R Bell, J Blakey, J Cairns, T Duffy, C Hampson, N Jones, B Kellett, L Kennedy, R Manchester, C Marshall, L Mavin, M McGaun, I McLean, J Quinn, S Quinn, G Richardson, K Rooney, J Shuttleworth and S Zair

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors H Crumbie, B Jones, G Lee and A J Scott

Minutes of a **meeting** of the **Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington** held at **Fire and Rescue HQ, Durham** on **16 September 2022** at **10.00 am**.

Present:

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors J Atkinson, A Batey, R Bell, J Blakey, J Cairns, T Duffy, B Kellet, L Kennedy, R Manchester, C Marshall, L Mavin, M McGaun, J Quinn, S Quinn, G Richardson, K Rooney, J Shuttleworth, W Stelling

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors B Jones, G Lee, A Scott

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Jones, S Zair, H Crumbie, and Independent Person N Johnson

Independent Persons:

No independent persons present.

The Chair asked members to join him in a minute's silence as a mark of respect following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The Queen served the Country and the Commonwealth for over 70 years with unwavering and remarkable dedication to duty. She will be sadly missed by millions of people across the globe.

The Chair informed the Authority that the Service's Annual Being the Best Awards night took place on Thursday 08 September at Hardwick Hall. Despite a more sombre occasion, given the death of the Queen being announced shortly after the start of the event, it was a fabulous night and it was fantastic to hear about all the wonderful things the staff in the Service do every day.

A1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A2 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (for copy see file of minutes).

A3 Current Correspondence

The Authority received an update from the Chief Fire Officer in relation to current correspondence received from government and other bodies relevant to the Authority and the status of each (for copy see file of minutes).

Discussion took place around grant funding and possible concerns for the Service following the employers' rejection of the 2% pay increase offer. Cllr Marshall stressed that as an Authority we should be writing to Government regarding current pay and asking for an inflation pay increase linked to how the fire service is funded. The Chair responded outlining that pay was dealt with at a national level through the NJC. Cllr Marshall asked if the Chair supported a pay award for firefighters. The Chair stated that he supported a pay award for all staff but that had to come with additional funding from the Government otherwise cuts to frontline services would be needed to fund any such award. The Chair also informed Members that he has written to the newly appointed Fire Minister regarding current budget concerns for the service. A separate letter of condolence had been sent to Kings Charles III.

Cllr Batey requested that correspondence to and from the Home Office is added to the Current Correspondence list so that all Members are kept informed of key issues.

ACTION: CFO Errington to add all future Home Office correspondence to the current correspondence list.

A4 Statement of Assurance

The Authority received a report providing Members with the 2021/22 Statement of Assurance.

The report was noted, the Statement of Assurance and its publication on the Service website was approved.

A5 Notes of the Performance Committee

The Authority received a report of the Chair of the Performance Committee which provided an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Committee held on the 8 September 2022 (for copy see file for minutes)

Cllr Marshall highlighted that he was in attendance at the committee meeting but has been noted on the report under the list of apologies. Cllr Marshall commended the service for the hard work carried out over a very busy summer period.

Cllr Batey put forward concerns regarding the recent spate of wildfires, in particular deliberate fires and the impact on climate change. CFO Errington explained a national document called Fit for the Future outlines how the service will look in the future and takes into consideration climate change.

ACTION: Minutes of the Performance Committee on 08 September to be amended to reflect Cllr Marshall's attendance.

ACTION: Link to the Fit for the Future document to be circulated to members.

Members noted the report.

A6 Recruitment of Independent Person to the Audit and Finance Committee

The Authority received a report updating on the position regarding the recruitment of an Independent Person to the Audit and Finance Committee

Members **agreed** and **approved** to re-commence the recruitment exercise to appoint an Independent Person on the Audit and Finance Committee until 30 April 2024.

A7 Any other Business

Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

A8 Exclusion to the Public

That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

Part B

B9 Pay Claims and National Industrial Relations Issues

The Authority received a report of the Chief Fire Officer outlining the latest position in relation to pay claims in the Fire and Rescue Service sector, potential industrial action and the impact this would have on the Authority.

Resolved:

- I. Members **noted** the report
- II. Members **approved** the latest version of the Business Continuity and Industrial Action Resilience Plan
- III. Members **agreed** to receive further updates as more information becomes available

B10 Appointment of Chief Fire Officer (CFO)

The Authority received a report of the Chair seeking approval to appoint Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) Steve Helps as the next Chief Fire Officer.

At the final stage interview DCFO Helps scored 85%. The unanimous recommendation of the Appointments Panel was to appoint DCFO Helps as the next substantive CFO, commencing on 12th January 2023.

Resolved:

Members **approved** the recommendation from the Authority's Appointments Panel to appoint Steve Helps as substantive CFO from 12 January 2023.

B11 Estates Update

The Authority received a report of the Director of Corporate Resources updating members on the latest position in relation to the Estates Improvement Programme.

Members **noted** the report.

B12 Human Resources Committee Update

The Authority received a report of the Director of People and Organisation Development updating members following applications received for early retirement/voluntary redundancy within the corporate function of the service.

Resolved

Members **noted** the report.

Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

CLOSE OF MEETING



Current Correspondence: September 2022 – November 2022

No	Release Date	Subject	Summary	Action CFA Report	Action CFA Response	Action Info
1	20/09/2022	Letter from HMI Roy Wilsher	Request for continued support for HMICFRS secondee programmes. Appendix A			X
2	20/10/2022	Letter to Secretary of State and Minister of State	Letter from Chair to Secretary of State and Minister of State regarding fire funding 2023/24 Appendix B			X
3	27/11/2022	Letter to Secretary of State, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP	Letter from Chair to Secretary of State regarding fire funding for 2023/24 Appendix C			X

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Promoting improvements
in policing and fire & rescue
services to make everyone safer

**His Majesty's Inspectorate of
Constabulary and Fire & Rescue
Services**

23 Stephenson Street,
Birmingham, B2 4BH
Direct Line: 07831 615237
Email: roy.wilsher@hmicfrs.gov.uk

Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue
Services

By email

Commissioner, London Fire Brigade
All Chief Fire Officers in England

20 September 2022

Dear Colleague

HMICFRS opportunities

I am writing to encourage your continued support for our secondee programmes. Without your help we lose an important part of our inspection team. Secondees have a role not only inspecting but in helping us retain our currency of knowledge. As we look forward to developing round 3 inspections, we hope you send us talented and enthusiastic people to assist us with keeping the public informed of the progress within the fire sector.

You will have received notification this week of our current job vacancies for inspection officers and service liaison leads. The roles are also advertised on the [Civil Service job search - Civil Service Jobs - GOV.UK](#). We will also shortly advertise for a Chief of Staff role in the same way. Please could you bring this to your work force's attention and encourage those who have talent and potential to apply. I understand we are asking for some of your best staff, but the knowledge and experience they will return with will be a justified investment.

I will speak more at the next Chief and Chairs event, but I also encourage you to consider how you will maintain contact and continue considering the development of those staff who are successful in the secondee process. I am delighted that so many of our secondees have returned to their services with a promotional opportunity. However, losing staff before their secondment ends puts a burden on the inspectorate and, I know because you tell me, causes unwelcome changes with our service liaison provision to you.

In Round 3 we would like to increase diversity in our teams. As well as looking at a range of skills we are also hoping to use this opportunity to reflect the services and the communities you serve. We need your help with this to encourage staff from all backgrounds. Please can you use your staff networks to ensure our secondment opportunities are promoted to help us increase our team's diversity.

Lastly, I would like to thank those services who have provided us with short-term staff for our last 2 tranches of inspection. I understand this must be disruptive for your own business needs. Short term secondees give us an opportunity to select teams with a varied fire service background and participants quickly become valued members of

inspection teams. I will write to you again when we start recruiting for round 3 inspection work. We will be recruiting from Watch Manager to Group Manager and non-operational equivalents

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Mick Mason or Damian Henderson, chiefs of staff, at Michael.Mason1@hmicfrs.gov.uk or Damian.Henderson@hmicfrs.gov.uk.

Thank you for your continued support of our inspection activity.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RW', written in a cursive style.

Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM
HM Inspector of Constabulary
HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services



This matter is being dealt with by: John Shuttleworth

Ext: 5555

Date: 20 October 2022

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Clerk,
County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority
County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UL

The Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Paul Scully MP
Minister of State (Minister for Local Government and Building Safety)

Dear Secretary of State and Minister of State,

Fire Funding for 2023/24

We are writing to you today to make the case for a fair funding settlement for the fire and rescue service and to ask for your help to avoid the Authority having to make cuts to frontline services that will increase the risk to the communities in County Durham and Darlington. Nationally fire and rescue services across England are facing significant inflationary pressures of around £145m in 2023/24 due to significant increases in utility costs, diesel and staff costs as a result of increases in the national living wage. These unavoidable pressures mean that Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) will have to make unacceptable decisions if these cost increases are not matched by increases in the funding available.

For County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service specifically we have lost in the region of £10M in government funding over the last twelve years, when inflation is taken into account. We are also disproportionately impacted by the council tax referendum limit due to the number of properties in council tax Band A and Band B across our area. This together with the high level of deprivation means that many residents are either exempt or qualify for discounts to their council tax bills. The Service is recognised by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services as being high performing, efficient and extremely productive but unless the funding position improves, we will see a significant reduction in performance and increased risk to the public.

If inflationary pressures are not covered by funding increases in the Local Government Settlement, the result will be a reduction in frontline wholetime and on-call firefighters with removal of fire engines and a resultant degradation in service. This will increase response times and risk and reduce the level of vitally important prevention and building safety inspection work.

We are seeking a settlement that delivers an increase in Settlement Funding that matches the rate of inflation to ensure our highly valued emergency service is still able to respond to incidents while maintaining our focus on prevention and protection post Grenfell. Over the last few years, the Service has also played a key role in supporting national resilience for either fire specific issues or multi-agency response, without sufficient funding this would no longer be possible going forward.

We are also seeking flexibility on the council tax referendum limit to allow a £5 increase on Band D council tax for all standalone FRAs. Last year this flexibility was offered to FRAs in the lower quartile of Band D precept levels however, this year all Services are facing similar inflationary pressures which require an increase in precept above the standard 2%. A £5 precept would raise in the region of £30m over and above a 2% increase. This is a relatively low sum in comparison with the overall level of council tax.

We are copying this letter to Rt Hon Edward Argar MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Members of Parliament for County Durham and Darlington.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr John Shuttleworth

**Chair of County Durham and
Darlington Fire and Rescue
Authority**



Stuart Errington QFSM

**Chief Fire Officer
County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service**

Cc the Right Hon Edward Argar MP – Chief Secretary to the Treasury



This matter is being dealt with by: John Shuttleworth
 Ext: 5555
 Date: 27 October 2022
 Our Ref:
 Your Ref:

Clerk,
 County Durham and Darlington
 Fire and Rescue Authority
 County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UL

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
 Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
 House of Commons
 London
 SW1A 0AA

Dear Secretary of State,

Fire Funding for 2023/24

We are writing to congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and to highlight the current concerns we have regarding the funding of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.

Last week we wrote to your predecessor, Simon Clarke MP, and we attach a copy of this letter which sets out our full case for a fair funding settlement.

You will see from this letter that our Service has absorbed significant cuts to our budget over the last 12 years and rising costs now mean that frontline services are at risk.

We would therefore welcome any opportunity to discuss this with you and extend an invitation for you to visit us at our Headquarters in County Durham.

We look forward to your response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr John Shuttleworth

**Chair of County Durham and
 Darlington Fire and Rescue
 Authority**

Stuart Errington QFSM

**Chief Fire Officer
 County Durham and Darlington
 Fire and Rescue Service**

Cc John Glen MP – Chief Secretary to the Treasury

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County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

11 November 2022

**Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 28
September 2022**

Report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee

Members Present: Cllr R Bell in the Chair
Cllrs J Blakey (substitute for B Kellett), N Jones, L Hughes
(substitute for H Crumbie)

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 28 September 2022.

Audit Completion Report

2. Members were given a summary of the report and it was noted that an unqualified opinion was anticipated.

Members **noted** the report.

Annual Internal Audit Opinion and Report 2021/22

3. Members received an update on the work that had been undertaken by internal audit during 2021/22. A moderate overall assurance opinion had been received, which should be regarded as positive.

Members **considered** and **noted** the report.

Annual Review of the System of Internal Audit 2021/22

4. Members received a report asking for consideration and comment on the annual review of the system of internal audit.

Members **noted** the report.

Fraud and Corruption Annual Report 2021/22

5. Members were presented with details of the advice and assurance provided regarding the work being undertaken within the Authority in seeking to identify, control and prevent fraud and corruption.

Members **noted** the report.

Internal Audit Progress Report 2021/22

6. Members were presented with details of the work that had been undertaken by Internal Audit between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Members **noted** and **considered** the report.

Internal Audit Progress Report 2022/23

7. Members were presented with the details of the work that was being undertaken by Internal Audit between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.

Members **noted** and **considered** the report.

Corporate Risk Register

8. Members were presented with the corporate risk register as at 31 August 2022.

Members **noted** the report.

Update on the Independent Review of Local Authority Financial Reporting and Audit (Redmond Review)

9. Members were provided with an update on the outcome of the Redmond Review into the Oversight of Local Audit and the Transparency of Local Authority Financial Reporting.

Short Term Investments – Period 31 March 2022 (Quarter 4)

10. Members received an update on the performance of the Authority's short-term investments for the period ended 31 March 2022.

Members **noted** the report.

Short Term Investments – Period to 30 June 2022 (Quarter 1)

11. Members received an update on the performance of the Authority's short-term investments for the period ended 30 June 2022.

Members **noted** the report.

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County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

11 November 2022

Notes of the Human Resources Committee: 22 September 2022

Report of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee

Members Present: Cllr L Mavin in the Chair
Cllr A Batey, C Marshall and J Quinn

Apologies: H Crumbie and J Cairns

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Human Resources (HR) Committee held on 22 September 2022.

Sickness Absence Performance Quarter One 2022/23

2. The Committee was updated on the sickness absence performance for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022. Members scrutinised in detail the sickness absence for quarter one.

The Committee **noted** and **commented** on the report.

Health and Safety Performance Quarter One 2022/23

3. The Committee considered and scrutinised the services health and safety performance for quarter one.

The Committee **noted** and **commented** on the report.

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

11 November 2022

Tri-Service Community Safety Responders

Report of the Director Community Risk Management

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to inform members of an expansion of the Tri-Service Community Safety Responder (CSR) scheme to the Teesdale and East Durham Coastal area.

Background

2. Currently there are two CSRs based at Stanhope. These posts are funded between Durham Constabulary and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) with a respective 60/40 funding split.
3. They are also trained to carry out medical first response as a co-responder. For this role they were trained by the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS). This training was seen as NEAS's contribution to the scheme.
4. The role of the Stanhope CSR is to perform the joint roles of Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), On-Call Firefighter and medical co-responder.
5. Their role is to also help drive further reductions in risk to the most vulnerable communities through a wider approach to prevention activities and conduct community safety work jointly on behalf of the three agencies.

New Scheme

6. The new scheme is a three-way agreement between Durham Constabulary, Durham County Council (DCC) and CDDFRS, covering the following key points:

- An additional four staff will be employed, two covering Teesdale and two covering the East Durham Coastal area;
- Durham Constabulary will be the employer;
- The medical co-responder element will not be conducted in these new schemes;
- The expansion will initially operate for two years;
- All four staff would carry out the role of PCSO, support DCC work related to community safety, housing and environmental issues and deliver CDDFRS community safety, and arson reduction workload;
- The two CSRs covering Teesdale would additionally carry out the role of on-call firefighters.

7. The key measures to benefit CDDFRS performance are:

- Number of Home Fire Safety Visits conducted;
- Number of onward referrals made to partner agencies;
- Number of school talks to discuss arson and deliberate fire setting delivered;
- Number of fixed penalty notices issued in respect of accumulations of waste and other combustible materials;
- Number of empty properties secured to prevent unauthorised access or dangers to public health;
- Number of Environmental Visual Audits completed;
- Number of reports for rubbish removals;
- For Teesdale only, an increase in fire appliance availability.

8. A Joint Management Group consisting of managers from each organisation has been set up to manage the performance of the CSRs. The performance against the key performance measures of Fire and Police will be scrutinised at the Fire/ Police Collaboration Delivery Board.

Funding

9. The cost of the two Teesdale CSRs will be equally shared between all three partners, whilst for the two East Durham Coast responders, DCC will fund 50%, with Durham Constabulary and CDDFRS each funding 25% each.
10. The year 1 cost for CDDFRS is expected to be £44,560.00, rising slightly to £49,786.67 for the second year.

Recommendations

11. Members are requested to **note** the report.

Keith Carruthers, Director Community Risk Management, Ext. 5564

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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